

Rethinking English as Medium of Instruction Policy in Multilingual Classrooms

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Article History:

Submitted 14 May, 2022

Reviewed 25 September 2022

Accepted 14 October 2022

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Article DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.3126/jong.v5i1-2.49278>

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Publisher

Nepal English Language Teachers'
Association Gandaki Province, Pokhara,
Nepal

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URL.: www.nelta.org.np/page/gandaki

Abstract

This paper reports the results of a study that unpacked teachers' experiences and challenges adopting EMI policy in the public schools' multilingual classrooms. Building on a phenomenological design, we selected two primary level teachers purposively and collected data through in-depth interviews. Drawing upon the thematic analysis and interpretation of the data, the study revealed that teachers perceived EMI as a tool for achieving English language proficiency for the students and a means for the public schools to compete with their private counterparts. Contrarily, EMI in the public school's multilingual classrooms was found to be practised just as slogan and insufficient for effective students' participation in classroom learning. Since EMI leads multilingual learners towards monolingual direction, it has posed problems to both the teachers and students due to the low English language proficiency. The study implies that the EMI policy in the lower grades of public schools should be implemented considering the linguistic and cultural milieus of the students.

Keywords: English as medium of instruction, multilingualism, multilingual learners, phenomenology

Introduction

Nepal is a multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural country where more than 123 languages are spoken as 'mother tongue' by 125 ethnic groups (CBS, 2012). Recently, six new languages spoken in Nepal have been identified such as Rana Tharu, Nar Phu, Chum (Syaar), Nubri (Larke), Poike and Serake (Seke). With these six new languages the number of languages of Nepal has reached 129 (Language Commission, 2019). In terms of the number of speakers, Nepali language remains at the first position by (44.6%), Maithili on the second (11.7%), Bhojpuri on the third

(5.98%), and Tharu language is on the fourth by (5.11%) of the speakers. There are some other languages in Nepal spoken by less than (5%) speakers of the total population. They include Newar (3.2%), Bajika (2.99%), Magar (2.98%), Doteli (2.97%), Urdu (2.61%), Avadhi (1.89%), Limbu (1.29%), Gurung (1.22%) and Baitadeli (1.02%) (Phyak & Ojha, 2019). To be Specific, the English language is on the 76th position as spoken by 0.01% people of the total population of the country (CBS, 2012). Since the Constitution of Nepal (2015) has provisioned to all local languages (mother tongue) spoken in Nepal as the national languages, only Nepali language is dominantly used in the official functions of the state.

The above corpus clearly shows the linguistic, ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of the Nepalese society which is in turn directly represented in the schools' classrooms. Almost all Nepalese schools' classes consist of the children representing from multiple communities. Nonetheless, the medium of instruction in the schools to instruct such diverse students is predominantly occupied by either Nepali or English language. Local and indigenous languages are yet to be employed extensively as the medium of instruction to address the linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom. Instead, majority of the public schools have employed English as medium of instruction (EMI) albeit lacking explicit plan and policy. They are shifting towards EMI with an unsubstantiated myth of enhancing quality of education and attracting the attention of the parents to enrol their children in the public schools competing with private schools. This growing trend of switching to EMI has unquestionably promoted the monolingual instructional strategies without any recourse to students' linguistic and cultural resources in the classroom instruction. The students are unnecessarily restricted to use their L1 and previous knowledge in the classroom discussion due to the imposition of EMI and posed injustice to the learners. In the same way, unplanned imposition of EMI to the public schools' classes has also created problem to the learners in receiving comprehensible input (Krashan, 1983) exposed to them in classroom instruction which also inhibits the learners from the adequate mastery of contents being taught and learnt. In the same regard, Shah and Li (2018) argue 'switching to the EMI without enough preparedness, contributed to a comprehension crisis in content learning, low proficiency in both English and Nepali, and loss of mother tongue for the students' (p.120). So, the practice of EMI has paved the way to strengthen monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classroom. This clearly entails the mismatch between what is happening now and what should have done vis-a-vis real contexts. Therefore, the medium of instruction in Nepalese multilingual context has been a contentious issue to be explored and settled down among the language policy researchers and pedagogical experts. Consequently, the phenomenon of employing EMI policy in public schools has become a genuine research agenda to be scrutinized from critical lens and it is equally significant to be reconceptualised situating it as per the Nepalese multilingual landscapes. Taking these issues into account critically, the paper attempts to answer the following research questions.

- How do teachers perceive and experience adopting EMI policy in primary level multilingual classroom?
- What are the problems that the teachers faced while enacting EMI policy among the early grades multilingual learners?

Review of Literature

Simply, EMI is referred to as the use of English language in the classroom instruction to present and deliver the contents of the instructional subjects to the students (Khatri, 2019). As Sah (2020) writes, “EMI as an instructional model of teaching non-English academic subjects in English in educational settings where English is not the mother tongue of most students, which aims to facilitate the learning of content knowledge as well as English skills” (p.1). Here, EMI is viewed as the use of English language in instruction where instructional courses are taught in English to the students whose first language is other than English. In Dearden’s (2014) words, “EMI is the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (p.1). He adds that there is rapid shift towards the use of EMI for teaching content related subjects like science, mathematics, medicine and that it is increasingly being used in the academic institutions. This has significant implications in the education of the children and the policy formulation of the non-anglophone nations (Dearden, 2014). Consequently, many non-native English-speaking countries are heading towards EMI in order to develop communicative competence in English and fulfil the increasing demand for English language development. In this line, Sah and Li (2018) add that over the past few decades, there is a growing trend of adopting English as a medium of instruction in the schools of non-English speaking countries. Likewise, Marsh (2006) mentions that many international educational institutions have shown their interest in employing English as the primary language of instruction between 1995 and 2005. Metaphorically, Macaro (2017) contends that the phenomenon of EMI has become an unstoppable train as it has already left the station. These remarks evidently indicate that the trend of employing EMI is expanding particularly in developing countries with the belief that EMI enhances the English language proficiency of the students and it is perceived as marker of modernization, global technological advancement and better socioeconomic mobility of the citizens (Bhattacharya, 2013; Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Tsui & Tollefson, 2004; Sah & Li, 2018). Hence, the phenomenon of EMI has been extensively spreading in educational contexts and received greater attention to researchers across the world.

The expanding trend of EMI in global educational contexts has also exerted its impact on the Nepalese educational contexts (Paudel, 2021). English medium schools were established by private sectors with the effect of liberal economic policies as legitimized by the 1990’s Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal (the- then His Majesty the Government, 1990). These schools adopted EMI to teach all subjects except Nepali and outperformed the public schools in achievements where medium of instruction remained Nepali except to teach English. Similarly, the National Curriculum Framework, (2007), formally provisioned both Nepali and English as medium of instruction in the school education (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2007). Then, MoE also implemented the Education Act (Government of Nepal, 2010) legitimizing both the Nepali and English languages as the medium of instruction in the public schools and it also loosely stresses on using mother tongues as the medium of instruction at the primary level (Phyak & Ojha, 2019). Thus, since 2010, many public schools have been shifting towards EMI and adopting it from the very beginning classes albeit the ‘lack of educational infrastructure, linguistically qualified teachers, teacher education programs, and professional development (in-service) courses’ (Sah & Li, 2018, p.110).

While there is growing craze for adopting EMI policy as synonymous with quality education in many contexts, it has minimal support with strong theoretical and empirical underpinnings. Moreover, in the history of language teaching, there has been a contentious dispute among the scholars on whether to adopt an “intra-lingual strategy”, (i.e., a monolingual approach that rejects first language use), or a “cross-lingual strategy”, (allows a judicious use of learners’ first language) in foreign language instruction (Stern, 1992). The ‘intra-lingual strategy assimilates with the monolingual assumptions which stresses on the exclusive use of the target language (TL) in the classroom instruction where students’ first language (L1) and translation of contents from the TL into L1 has no place in the language learning. Moreover, even in the bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept rigidly separate (Cummins, 2007). This monolingual trend permeated the language pedagogy for long decades despite minimal backing of the research evidences. In contrast, cross-lingual strategy assimilates with a set of bilingual and multilingual instructional strategies. In this regard, Cummins (2007) presents the theory of engaging prior understandings and cites Donovan and Bransford (2005) as “new understandings are constructed on a foundation of existing understandings and experiences” (p. 232). It implies that student’s prior skills, knowledge and resources play tremendous role in the TL learning and such prior understandings of the learners should be activated and get maximally utilized for learning L2. Similarly, Cummins’s (1981, as cited in Cummins, 2007) ‘Interdependence Hypothesis’ provides strong theoretical underpinning to rethink and reconceptualise English-only monolingual instructional practices. The ‘interdependence hypothesis’ states, “To the extent that instruction in L_x is effective in promoting proficiency in L_x, transfer of this proficiency to L_y will occur provided there is adequate exposure to L_y (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn L_y” (p. 20). It implies that there is interdependence across the languages as a result cross lingual transfer takes place as a normal process. Moreover, since languages are interdependent in many respects, knowledge of one language supports to learning of another language. These theoretical orientations suggest that the cross-lingual strategy plays significant role in TL instruction. It also exerts tremendous implications to enact EMI practices considering the prior linguistic resources of L1 possessed by the L2 learners. Moreover, Auerbach (1993) argues that integrating students’ first language in learning provides them a sense of security specially at their early stages of linguistic development. Similarly, Schweers (1999) emphasizes the judicious and careful use of students’ first language to facilitate the second/foreign language learning process. In a similar vein, Eldridge (1996) contends that there is no practical evidence to support the belief that constraining mother tongue use would necessarily improves learner’s L2 efficiency. Remarkably, Atkinson (1987) also notes that it is virtually inappropriate to restrict the students using L1 in the L2 classroom.

The EMI policy and its practice in the multilingual contexts are critiqued in many ways with empirical substantiation accentuating the usage of learners' first languages in the second language instruction at the initial stage of education. In this line, Yip and Tsang (2007) and Civan and Coskum (2016), in their studies, have revealed that EMI policy particularly at the initial classes can be detrimental to quality learning. With reference to the Mali bilingual education program, Bender’s (2006) study revealed that the use of student’s first language as the medium of instruction has positive effects on using first language (L1)

as the medium of instruction (MOI) on both content learning and second or foreign language development of the primary grade children. The L1 MOI policy increased access and equity, improved learning outcomes, and reduced repetition and drop-out rates of the minority children. Moreover, Khan (2014) asserted that children's learning is significantly influenced when they are taught in a language that contrasts with their home languages. Baral's (2015) study revealed that EMI instruction focuses on memorizing facts without understanding and their creativity is not fostered to the fullest, resulting in a generation that is poorly educated. Putting emphasis on learners' mother tongue as MOI over other languages, Pinnock's (2009) study also indicated that when the learner's first language is not the medium of instruction, the educational performance of children pulls down. Thus, there is always a risk that adopting a foreign language for instruction will lower the academic success of the students especially when teachers also lack adequate English language proficiency (Sah & Li, 2018; Giri, 2011). Similarly, Caddell (2007) asserts that instead of emphasizing on equal access to education, endorsing English as only the language of instruction, at the expense of local languages may widen gap in the quality instruction between the rich and the poor because valuable indigenous languages and cultural resources, as well as the potential for effective bilingual/multilingual education, are being lost (Caddell, 2007).

Both the theoretical and empirical literature evidently indicate that acknowledging learner's first language skills, knowledge and understandings is beneficial to L2 instruction and fulfil a multitude of functions. Moreover, it also exerts tremendous implications to critically analyse the enormous expansion and practice of EMI policy in public schools at the expense of local indigenous languages of the learners. More strikingly, the literatures reviewed above provide impetus with the agents to rethink and reconceptualise the EMI policy and enact it with response to linguistic diversity that exists in the classroom.

Methodology

This is a phenomenological study which attempts to unpack the conscious experiences primary level teachers on teaching through EMI policy in the public school's classrooms. To this end, we purposively selected two primary level teachers from two different schools located in Kathmandu valley where EMI policy was implemented. Among the selected teachers, Narendra (pseudonym) has two decade of teaching experience and Yamuna (pseudonym) was found to be teaching for a decade at primary level following EMI policy. Therefore, we contacted them, built rapport and asked their formal consent for the interview data. After that we conducted unstructured in-depth interview (like open conversations) with the participant teachers through telephone in separate times to unpack their perception and experiences of teaching in the EMI classes at primary level and we recorded the interview on audio record. We conducted the interview in an open and nonthreatening environment being based on the major issue of the study. During the interview, we attempted to follow the principle of bracketing that we tried to make probing on participants' claims and arguments excluding our presupposition on the area being investigated. When the first-phase of interview is over, we transcribed the record of the interview listening to the audio record minutely. After that, we read interview transcripts line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph, looking for incidents and facts, and coded for anything and everything that seems potentially relevant to the topic.

After coding the data from the transcripts of first-phase interview, we also took follow-up interview on some less elaborated but genuine arguments made by the participants during their first-phase interview. After merging their opinions, we added some more basic themes on the list. While generating themes from the codes, we employed Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network analysis method. In this regard, we followed two major steps in generating themes that is basic themes and global themes, as suggested in the thematic network analysis. First, we identified and patterned the basic themes out of the codes. Secondly, we derived the global themes on the basis of the basic themes and analysed and interpreted accordingly.

Results and Discussion

Drawing on the research questions, four global themes were generated as: EMI for competence and competition, EMI as just a slogan in multilingual classroom, EMI leads multilingual learners to monolingual direction and EMI possess difficulty to the teachers. In what follows, we present the analysis and interpretation of the major themes using the verbatim as shared by the participants.

EMI for Competence and Competition

Recently, EMI has become a preferred medium of instruction policy for many public schools of Nepal and implemented from the early grades (Phyak, 2016; Sah & Karki, 2020). These schools have chosen and implemented EMI policy with various purposes depending upon the local and global factors. In the same concern, we conducted an in-depth interview with the selected teachers who are representing from the two different public schools where EMI policy is under practice. We inquired them about their perceptions on implementing EMI policy in the early grades of their schools. In response, teachers came up with their own views relating to their personal experiences. In the course of sharing his perceptions about the reason for enacting EMI policy in the school, one of the participant teachers, Narendra (pseudonym) mentioned in the interview, "EMI is necessary at present time. It helps our students develop English speaking ability and communicate in English with other people. If the students are competent in English, they can easily go abroad for study and job in the future." He further shared that his school implemented EMI policy due to the parental pressure as they wanted their children send to the English medium schools. As he revealed, "It is our compulsion to run our classes through EMI otherwise parents send their children to private English medium schools". In a similar vein, another teacher, Yamuna (pseudonym) exposed her perceptions as:

English is an international language; it is used in all over the world. EMI supports the students to develop basic competence in English language. Students with good English can compete for further study and job both nationally and internationally. While we teach them in Nepali medium, their English becomes poor so that they cannot compete with the students from private schools in the exam.

The view of the teachers has compliance with Hamid et al.'s (2013) remarks as 'the primary goals of EMI in Asia are to enhance English language proficiency, develop human capital to enter the global economy, improve the quality of education, and internationalize local business and education'. Similarly, the perception of the teachers has correspondence with Sah and Li's (2018) findings that EMI as linguistic

capital (Bourdieu, 1993) to develop English skills and enhance quality education, which they hoped would facilitate their children's access to higher education, economic development, knowledge economy, and social mobility. Moreover, it has also alignment with Phyak's (2016) conclusion that EMI policy has been a major source of attraction for parents so that public schools are replicating the same policy to attract more students and they feel ideological pressure to adopt the policy to compete with private schools. Thus, it is evident from the teacher's perceptions that EMI policy in the public schools is under practice with a view to enhancing English language proficiency among the students that can be a resource for achieving upward socioeconomic mobility (Ricento, 2015). Moreover, EMI has an instrumental value that is basically used to offer quality education to the students through English language. It also indicates that EMI is a major tool with which public schools are competing with private schools. Nonetheless, the perceived beliefs of the teachers point out further issue to have explored on how far such beliefs have come to effect in actual instruction in the multilingual classroom. In what follows, we illustrate and discuss the teacher's experiences of employing EMI policy in the multilingual classrooms.

EMI as a Slogan in the Multilingual Classroom

While the phenomenon of EMI has been perceived as a key tool to enhance English language proficiency of the students, its actual practice seems to be scanty in majority of the EFL contexts. In order to explore the conditions of actual practice of EMI in teaching content-related subjects like Social Studies, Science and Environment, we inquired the teachers to share their actual classroom experiences using EMI to teach the elementary level students. In the interview, they shared that EMI is not effectively practiced in the linguistically and culturally diverse classes. They articulated that they are compelled to use Nepali language to translate the contents from English and make their students understand. In this line, a participant teacher, Narendra shared the reality how he is enacting EMI in the classroom among multilingual students:

Frankly speaking, EMI in the public school is implemented just in name (*kam chalu English medium*). In my class, I try to deliver the contents in English but my students cannot respond anything. I cannot handle the class only through EMI without using Nepali language. When I deliver the contents in Nepali at the end, students feel relieved and seem as if they understand the things as delivered.

Another participant teacher, Yamuna also exposed her experiences that since EMI policy is employed in her school, it is not effectively practised in the classroom because students are very reluctant in speaking in English. She further reflected that her students are of different levels and varied linguistic and cultural background, most of the time they remained silent when she conducted the class only through English. As she says, "EMI is just a slogan (*Nara*), it is not well materialized in real practice [...]. Even in the EMI class, we cannot escape without delivering the contents in Nepali at the end".

The experiences of the teachers imply that since the public school's authorities have decided to implement EMI policy from the very early grades, its on-the-ground-practice is very meagre. The actual practice of EMI is not corresponding to the desired goals and motivations for which it was decided to

implement initially. Instead, the practice of EMI was found to be effective only through bilingual approach where use of Nepali language seemed to be a supportive tool for the teachers to make their students understand the contents being taught and learnt. In this line, Sah and Karki (2020) also asserted that teachers in the EMI programme use Nepali as a default language to complement teaching and learning content knowledge.

EMI Leads Multilingual Learners to Monolingual Direction

Linguistic and cultural diversity is the undeniable reality of Nepalese school's classes. Despite this reality, there is a growing trend of employing EMI policy in the Nepalese schools from the very early grades restricting other home languages of the learners to be used in the classroom instruction. In the same concern, teachers were asked whether it is wise to restrict the multilingual students learning through only one language in the class. They were also inquired to share their view on restricting the multilingual students to a single language (hence English) for learning the content-related subjects. To this end, one of the teachers, Yamuna, who teaches science at grade 4, went against to this assumption. As she argued:

I think controlling the multilingual students to use only one language for learning contents related matters is not sensible. In the name of EMI, we cannot restrict our students speaking in their mother tongues (mostly Nepali). They can understand and learn the contents better when it is presented in their first language in the class than in the second language (English). So, it is wise to allow the multilingual learners use their first language to learn and understand the content-related subjects.

In the same regard, another teacher, Narendra who teaches social studies at grade three in one of the selected schools came up with a bit more critical opinion that EMI promotes monolingual instructional policy. It primarily focuses on the use of single language (English) in the classroom derecognizing students' first languages. As he critically comments:

EMI restricts the multilingual learners to learn the contents in a single language. As students are of diverse linguistic background and have a varied level of proficiency in English, EMI cannot address all students' learning potential. Only good students participate actively and get benefited but weaker students remain untreated. It creates injustice to less intelligent students.

He went on to argue that there should be flexible policy in the class for switching the languages for classroom discussion in the content-based subjects other than language related courses like English and Nepali. He stated that when students are allowed to have classroom discussion in their first languages, they can actively participate in learning and understand and present the content in an effective way. In a similar concern, Yamuna added that when she allowed her students to have group discussion in Nepali and prepare final version of the classroom task in English, they felt comfortable and could prepare the task more quickly than restricting them only in English. Here, the views of the teachers have compliance with Pattanayak's (1988, p. 382) assertion that [o]ne language is an impractical proposition for a multilingual country rather the teaching profession often legitimates the normalization of English as the preferable (and Only) language of the world ... partly by devaluing other languages.

The above evidences indicate that teaching and learning via EMI policy leads the students from

diverse background towards the monolingual direction. The bi/multilingual learners were found to be facing difficulty in learning only in English as they were restricted in using their first language in the classroom discussion. Moreover, it implies that there should be multilingual instructional strategies to incorporate multilingual students for the effective learning of content-related subjects where EMI only strategy remains insufficient to offer adequate content knowledge to the students.

EMI Poses Difficulty to the Teachers

Building on another research question, the interview was situated on revealing the problems faced by the teachers in the course of adopting EMI policy in the multilingual classroom. In this issue, teachers shared different types of problems as they encountered while using EMI for teaching the content-based courses to the early grades. In the course of interview, they shared that EMI has posed difficulty to the teachers because they do not possess adequate level of proficiency in English. Though they had good knowledge of contents to be taught, they lacked conversational English to conduct and present the contents through English. Due to their poor presentation skill in English, they hardly made the students understand the contents being delivered in the class. In this regard, one of the participants, Narendra recounted as, “EMI has become a difficult thing for me because I do not have good command over English. EMI has posed extra load that I have to work harder to prepare the everyday lesson”. He added that he felt difficulty in presenting the prepared lesson through English in the actual classroom. He complained that his school implemented EMI policy without proper planning and managing resources for its effective enactment. He further articulated that the school has not made any effective attempt to provide trainings and workshops to strengthen teacher’s pedagogical strategies for EMI activities. As he says “The practice of EMI depends upon how an individual teacher executes it as per his/her own proficiency”. In specific to his experience of teaching of social studies course, he faced problems in giving clear concept of culture specific terminologies through English. In the same purpose, another teacher Yamuna realized similar types of problem in executing EMI activities in the class. As she confessed “I myself have been facing problem in handling classes in English. I am not the student of English instead my specialization subject is Nepali. I can’t speak English fluently; however, I am trying as much as I can”. In her observation, handling lower grade classes through English is difficult for the teachers who are not from the English major background and it is a burden to them. The views of the teachers seem consistent with Giri’s (2011) view that lack of English language proficiency of the teachers is the biggest challenge community schools are facing to implement EMI. Most of the teachers in community schools have never studied in English themselves, were never trained to teach in English and have been used to teaching through the medium of Nepali for years (Ojha, 2018). Similar to this issue, Sah and Li (2018) also found that the teachers lacked pedagogical skills in the absence of proper training and opportunities for professional development. The school did not provide any support for professional development, nor did it offer any preparatory training before it opted into the EMI policy.

Another problem for the teachers in EMI class is low and uneven student’s participation in classroom interactions and activities. Both the teachers shared the similar kind of problem that they could

not make the class interactive due to the low proficiency of English in themselves and among their students. Since they attempted to make class interactive and communicative through some formulaic expressions of English, their students did not respond. In this regard, Narendra revealed the reality of his class as “My students are the beginners and their English is very weak. When I ask them to tell the answer of the given question, they just say the answer in phrase or with key words as they noticed in the text”. In the same way, Yamuna shared her experience that she was not satisfied with her EMI class because she had to speak all the time in the class. Her students did not speak anything rather they listened to her and noted down what she wrote on the board. She further confessed that she could not incorporate all students in the active interaction during her teaching. Majority of the students remained silent where only relatively better students participated in the classroom activities. At that time, she was obliged to tell the contents in Nepali language to address all the students. These responses correspond with Baral’s (2015) findings that low student participation in classroom activities and interactions is one of the major challenges in teaching English and through English in Nepal, particularly in the lower grades. As students are not fully competent in English, they do not fully participate in performing classroom activities that require interactions in English, thus [...] use of a foreign language for instruction will compound the difficulties for both students and teachers.

The above results entail that the teachers have encountered different types of problems while employing and experiencing EMI based instructional activities in the multilingual classroom. It also indicates that teachers have been facing such problems due to their personal and institutional reasons. They have been struggling to handle the classes through English due to the lack of adequate proficiency and skills in the English language particularly in presenting the prepared contents to the students in a comprehensible manner. Similarly, teachers have not been employing EMI based instructional activities effectively as they lack necessary trainings and workshops for its effective practice in the multilingual contexts. In the same way, teachers were also found to be facing the problem in making effective participation of students in the EMI-led classroom activities. The results suggest that EMI policy should be enacted with proper plans and management of the resources needed for its effective practices. It implies that teacher’s adequate proficiency of English is a primary determinant for the effective practice and enactment of EMI in the class.

Conclusion and Implications

This study investigated how EMI policy has been implemented and practiced in the multilingual classroom in the lower grades of public schools of Nepal. As the results indicated, EMI has been viewed as a means for achieving English language proficiency on the part of students in non- English-speaking contexts like Nepal. Moreover, EMI policy in such contexts has been accepted as a resource to gain social and intellectual upward mobility. More specifically, public schools have implemented EMI policy with a view to offering quality education so as to compete with the private English medium schools. Despite the instrumental motives on EMI, its actual practice is not corresponding to the desired goals and motivations for which it was decided to implement initially. Instead, the practice of EMI was found to be effective only through bilingual approach chiefly ‘cross lingual transfer’ (Cummins, 2007) in which use of Nepali language seemed to

be a supportive tool for the teachers to make their students understand the contents being taught and learnt. The study revealed that teaching the content-based subjects in the multilingual classroom through a single language (English-only) seemed to be less effective approach. It also revealed that teaching and learning via EMI policy leads the diverse background students towards the monolingual direction. The bi/multilingual learners were found to be facing difficulty in learning only in English as they were restricted in using their first language in the classroom discussion. Moreover, EMI-only instructional strategy in the public schools' multilingual classroom was seen as just a *slogan* and not well enacted. It seemed to be insufficient to offer adequate content knowledge to the students. Similarly, the enactment of EMI policy has posed problems and difficulty to the teachers. They have been facing difficulty in presenting the contents due to the lack of adequate English language proficiency. It has added extra burden to the teachers for preparing and practicing contents in English for classroom presentation. Likewise, EMI based instructional strategy did not incorporate all the students in classroom activities. Therefore, the study suggests that the EMI policy should be implemented considering the linguistic and cultural milieu of the classroom. It has also provided the impetus to rethink in enacting EMI policy and adopt the bi/multilingual instructional strategies so as to facilitate the learning process of multilingual learners.

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